

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

GENERAL NOTES.

NOTES ON SOME NAMES OF LIONS.

The names for three subspecies of lions, *Felis leo barbarus* for the animal of extreme northern Africa, *Felis leo persicus* for the form found in western Asia, and *Felis leo senegalensis* for the Senegal Lion, have heretofore dated from Fischer's "Synopsis Mammalium," 1829. Through the courtesy of Dr. C. W. Richmond I have been able to examine a work by J. N. von Meyer, published in Vienna about August 1, 1826, in which all three of these forms are properly named and diagnosed. Fortunately the names here used are exactly the same as those in current use, with the exception of the first, which is given as *barbaricus* instead of *barbarus*. The title of the work is as follows: "Dissertatio inauguralis anatomico-medica de Genere Felium," etc., by Joannes Nep. nobilis de Meyer. There can be no possible doubt as to the time of publication as the introduction is dated July 12, 1826, and the title page advertises a discussion at the Vienna University for August 5, 1826. The descriptions occur on page 6. These three subspecies of the lion will stand as *Felis leo barbaricus* Meyer, type locality Barbary; *Felis leo persicus* Meyer, type locality Persia; and *Felis leo senegalensis* Meyer, type locality Senegal.

The lion of the Cape Region of South Africa was first named by Fischer in his "Synopsis Mammalium," p. 565, 1829, as *Felis leo* var *capensis*, and was later recognized as a distinct species by Fitzinger (Sitzb. Akad. Wiss., LVIII, p. 436, 1868), who called it *Leo capensis*. The form nowadays is generally considered a subspecies, under the name *Felis leo capensis*. The name *Felis capensis* was, however, previously used by Forster (Phil. Trans. R. Soc., LXII, p. 1, 1781) and Gmelin (Syst. Nat., I, p. 81, 1788) for the serval of South Africa. The name *capensis* obviously can not be used for any form of the lion.

A valid specific name for the Cape Lion is found in the *Leo melanochaitus* of Charles Hamilton Smith in his "Introduction to Mammalia," Jardine's Naturalists Library, Vol. XV, second edition, page 177, 1858.

On plate X this name occurs as *Felis (Leo) melanochortus*. As in another instance in the same work the engraver is evidently responsible for this difference in the spelling of the specific name on the plate. The Cape Lion will therefore stand as *Felis melanochaitus* (Smith).

—N. Hollister.